

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 EA-06 SAM-01 SCCT-01 /080 W

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P R 010400Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1345

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7037

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOJN PK, AF

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO THE PANJSHER CLASH

REF: A. KABU 4881

B. ISLAMABAD 6909

C. KABUL 4965

D. ISLAMABAD 1472

1. SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN AND PRESS ARE BILLING THE RECENT CLASH IN AFGHAN DISTRICT OF PANJSHER AS A POPULAR ANTI-GOVERNMENT UPRISING, INVOLVING VERY HEAVY CASUALTIES TO WHICH GOA BRUTALLY OVERREACTED. NOT SURPRISINGLY, GOP OFFICIALS SUPPORT EARLIER MFA DENIAL (REF B) OF ANY PAK INVOLVEMENT IN INCIDENT. AFGHAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH RELATED ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT JULY 26 TO AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR. ACCOUNT WAS VERY SIMILAR TO THAT GARNERED BY LOUIS DUPREE (REF A) IN THAT IT INCLUDED, INTER ALIA, CHARGE THAT AFGHANS, TRAINED AT ATTOCK FORT AND ARMED BY PAKS, HAD CAUSED FRACAS. WE CONSIDER IT MOST UNLIKELY (AS SUGGESTED REF C, PARA 5) THAT PAK MILITARY WOULD EMBARK ON ADVENTURE OF THIS SORT WITHOUT OFFICIAL APPROVAL.

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IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT AS GOP'S HOME MINISTER

WARNED FEBRUARY 18 (REF D) PAKS MAY HAVE OPTED FOR THIS ROUTE TO RETALIATE FOR WHAT MOST PAKISTANIS TAKE TO BE INTERFERENCE OF AFGHANS IN PAK DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO PAK PRESS, OVER 600 PERSONS INCLUDING GOVERNOR AND QAZI (JUDICIAL HEAD) OF PARVAN PROVINCE WERE KILLED IN THE CLASHES AFTER JULY 22 AT PANJSHER. INCIDENT REPORTED IN ALL NEWSPAPERS JULY 30 (GOP DENIAL OF INVOLVEMENT PRINTED PREVIOUS DAY (REF B)) WITH PESHAWAR DATELINE. PRESS ACCOUNTS BASED ON IDENTICAL WIRE SERVICE ITEMS FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN AND PAKISTAN PRESS INTERNATIONAL USING "REPORTS RECEIVED FROM AFGHANISTAN." THRUST OF STORIES IS THAT GOA BRUTALLY REACTED TO POPULAR UPRISING IN WHICH "VOLUNTEERS FROM NEIGHBORING PROVINCES" ASSISTED "PEOPLE OF PANJSHER." ACCOUNTS SAY THAT GOVERNMENT RUSHED ARMY BRIGADE SUPPORTED BY ARTILLERY AND PARA-TROOPERS TO QUELL "GROWING FORCE OF REBELS." TROOPS REPORTEDLY SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES. (NOTE: IN PAST AMCONSUL PESHAWAR HAS QUESTIONED LOCAL APP OFFICE ABOUT SEVERAL PESHAWAR DATELINED STORIES REPORTING AFGHAN NEWS AND FOUND THEM LESS THAN KNOWLEDGEABLE. THUS, WE ASSUME GOP PROBABLY USES WIRE SERVICES THERE AS VEHICLE FOR PLANTING ITS OWN ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING THIS ONE, WHICH ARE DEROGATORY TO GOA.)

3. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON MFA, DIRECTOR (AFGHANISTAN) GHORI, JULY 30, TO DISCUSS PRESS REPORTS OF INCIDENT AND DENIAL. GHORI SEEMED UNCOMFORTABLE WITH CASUALTY FIGURES REPORTED IN PRESS (HE DID MENTION THAT ABOUT 1000 PERSONS WERE INVOLVED) AND PRESSED EMBASSY OFFICER TO GET OUR ASSESSMENT OF CASUALTIES. DESCRIBING THE INCIDENT AS ONE IN WHICH GOA "USED HAMMER TO KILL FLY" DIRECTOR PAINTED PICTURE OF KABUL GOVERNMENT FEARFUL OF OVERTHROW WHICH OVER-REACTED BY PLACING AIR FORCE ON ALERT AND RINGING KABUL WITH ARMORED UNITS TO PREVENT ANY SPREAD OF VIOLENCE THERE AND BY FORCING SOME AIR FORCE UNITS TO SWEAR OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

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4. GHORI SEEMED TO HAVE NO LINE PREPARED FOR DISSEMINATION ON CAUSE OF INCIDENT. AFTER SOME PAUSE, HE GUESSED THAT SINCE PANJSHER'S RESIDENTS ARE TAJIKS OF THE SHIA ISLAMIC SECT, RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES WITH THE GOA MIGHT HAVE LED TO VIOLENCE. WHEN EMBASSY OFFICER ASKED IF ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED, GHORI RECALLED THAT SARDAR DAUD'S

NEWLY ANNOUNCED LAND REFORMS WERE PERCEIVED BY PANJSHER RESIDENTS, SMALL LAND HOLDERS THEMSELVES, AS AGAINST THEIR INTERESTS, THUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.

5. ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR, GOP'S DENIAL OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE AFFAIR WAS IN RESPONSE TO AFGHAN INTERIOR MINISTER'S STATEMENT AS BROADCAST BY RADIO KABUL. (TO DATE, GHORI SAID, NEITHER GOA NOR GOP HAS MADE ANY OFFICIAL PROTEST OVER THE MATTER.) HE SHRUGGED OFF AFGHAN ALLEGATIONS OF PAK INVOLVEMENT BY NOTING THAT GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF PANJSHER MADE THIS IMPROBABLE.

6. WE HAVE LEARNED FROM AUSTRALIANS THAT WAHEED ABDULLAH JULY 26 TOLD AMBASSADOR MORRIS (WHO IS ACCREDITED TO BOTH AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN) THAT PAKS HAD HEAVY HAND IN AFFAIR. ABDULLAH (WHO CLAIMED TO BE PRESENT AT THEIR INTERROGATION), SAID 27 PRISONERS, ALL AFGHANS, WERE TAKEN. THEY REPORTEDLY CONFESSED (ABDULLAH CLAIMED HE FELT CONFESSIONS GENUINE) THAT AFTER BEING MISLED BY REACTIONARY MULLAHS, THEY WENT TO PAKISTAN FOR TWO MONTHS' GUERILLA TRAINING AT ATTOCK FORT. WHILE THERE, THEY WERE ADDRESSED BY GENERAL AKBAR (WE ASSUME THIS TO MEAN MAJOR GENERAL ((RETD)) AKBAR KHAN, NOW SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR BACKWARD AREAS). ABDULLAH SAID THE GUERILLAS WERE EQUIPPED WITH UNMARKED SUBMACHINE GUNS, GRENADES AND PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES BELIEVED BY AFGHANS TO HAVE BEEN MANUFACTURED AT "CHINESE FACTORY" AT WAH, PUNJAB. (YKS DO HAVE ORDNANCE FACTORY AT WAH.)

7. ACCORDING TO ABDULLAH, INCIDENT BEGAN AT 2:00 AM
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JULY 23 WHEN A GROUP SEIZED CONTROL OF THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AND A POLICE STATION IN PANJSHER, THEN AT DAWN INFORMED INHABITANTS THAT "GODLESS, COMMUNIST" DAUD REGIME HAD BEEN OVERTHROWN. TOWNSPEOPLE, BY THIS ACCOUNT, OPPOSED REBELS AND HAD TAKEN SEVEN PRISONERS

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 EA-06 SAM-01 SCCT-01 /080 W

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P 010400Z AUG 75

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 7037

BY TIME HELO-BORNE TROOPS ARRIVED. ABDULLAH TOLD MORRIS THAT WHILE THERE WAS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE OF ANY SYMPATHETIC MOVEMENT IN KABUL, THE FAILURE OF ANOTHER GUERRILLA GROUP COULD HAVE PRECLUDED DISTURBANCES THERE. THE OTHER GROUP ATTACKED A POLICE STATION AND UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO BLOW UP TWO ELECTRICITY PYLONS IN THE LATABAN PASS. DESTRUCTION OF THE PYLONS WOULD HAVE PLUNGED KABUL INTO DARKNESS AND COULD HAVE SIGNALLED ACTION IN THAT CITY.

8. AMBASSADOR MORRIS RELATED ABDULLAH'S ACCUSATIONS TO ADDITIONAL FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAHNAWAZ IN ISLAMABAD JULY 29. SHAHNAWAZ DENIED ANY GOP INVOLVEMENT. NOTE: WE ARE MEETING WITH MORRIS AND WITH MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL MANSOOR AHMED AUGUST 1 AND WILL REPORT FURTHER IF WE DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION.

9. CHARGE OF GOP INVOLVEMENT IN UPRISINGS IS BY FAR MOST SPECIFIC WE HAVE SEEN ALTHOUGH OTHERS HAVE BEEN PERCOLATING UP FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. WE, OF COURSE, HAVE NO WAY OF SUBSTANTIATING AFGHAN ACCUSATIONS THAT PAKISTAN ARMY (PA) TRAINED AFGHANISTAN GUERRILLAS IN ATTOCK FORT. HOWEVER, GIVEN CLOSE WATCH WHICH BHUTTO CONFIDENTIAL

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KEEPS ON THE MILITARY AND THE SENSIBLE APPROACH WHICH THEY NORMALLY ADOPT TOWARD FOREIGN ADVENTURES, WE DOUBT VERY STRONGLY THAT THE PA WOULD "UNOFFICIALLY" SUPPORT ANY SUCH ACTIVITIES AS SUGGESTED BY DUPREE IN REFTEL C.

WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY OFFICERS IN THE PA WHOSE FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIC ZEAL WOULD LEAD THEM TO ASSIST IN TRAINING AND ARMING A LIKE-MINDED GUERILLA GROUP WITH THE AIM OF TOPPLING THE DAUD GOVERNMENT. AND WERE SUCH OFFICERS TO ATTEMPT ACTIVITIES ON THE SCALE AND IN THE LOCATION SUGGESTED ABOVE, WE ARE SURE THAT GOP WOULD SOON LEARN OF IT.

10. WHILE WE THUS DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY OF PA INVOLVEMENT WITHOUT OFFICIAL SANCTION, WE OF COURSE, CANNOT ENTIRELY RULE OUT CHANCE OF GOP ROLE IN AFFAIR. KEEPING IN MIND THAT MOST OF THE PAKISTANI PUBLIC AND GOP OFFICIALDOM BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A GOA HAND IN TERRORIST INCIDENTS ON THIS SIDE OF THE DURAND LINE, WE CONSIDER THAT A LOW-KEY PROGRAM OF RETALIATION WOULD FIND SUPPORTERS HERE. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED IN THIS CONNECTION, THAT FOLLOWING ASSASSINATION OF NWFP SENIOR MINISTER SHERPAO IN FEBRUARY, HOME MINISTER QAIYUM KHAN WARNED AFGHANS THAT "WE SHALL CERTAINLY RETALIATE IF THE MISCHIEF (BOMBING) IS NOT STOPPED FORTHWITH." (REF D) BUT TO DATE WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH GOP ROLE IN THE PANJSHER INCIDENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, PROVINCE, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ISLAMA07037
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750266-0902
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750891/aaaadckz.tel
Line Count: 246
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 KABUL 4881, 75 ISLAMABAD 6909, 75 KABUL 4965, 75 ISLAMABAD 1472
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTIONS TO THE PANJSHER CLASH
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006